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CIA: THE INSIDE STORY—IV

By Andrew Tully

JFK Embarrassed by Own Agents When French Generals Revolted

The scene was the ornate suite in the Quai d'Orsay of Maurice Couve de Murville, Foreign Minister of the Republic of France, onetime ambassador to the U.S.

On stage were Mr. de Murville and Pierre Salinger, press secretary to the President of the United States.

Salinger: Monsieur de Murville, do you have any evidence at all that the United States Central Intelligence Agency was involved in the revolt of French generals in Algeria?

Murville: No, we have no evidence.

Salinger: Then I suggest that you stop peddling the story.

Pierre Salinger was furious personally, and by proxy for President Kennedy, over rumors of CIA meddling in the Algerian crisis that not only had not been denounced by official France, but which had been passed around by supposedly responsible French officials.

THE GOSSIP was that CIA had become convinced that the Communists would take over in Algeria if Gen. Charles de Gaulle carried out his intent to give the country independence and so had paid aid and comfort to the plotting generals in their abortive putsch.

Before the dust settled and CIA's role was made clear, this is what happened:

On Feb. 22, 1961, within hours after the outbreak of the mutiny, rumors began to circulate in Paris and notably in Washington that CIA had played a part in encouraging the revolt. At the time CIA was very much in the international news because of its role in the disastrous "invasion" of Cuba.

Rumors stressed the logic of CIA's involvement by noting Gen. Maurice Challe, leader of the revolt, had been close to American military circles.

story?" Salinger asked Baraduc.

"I'm not putting it out," Baraduc replied. "It seems to have sprung from nowhere. But you have to admit the story sounds logical."

BARADUC ARRANGED a meeting between Salinger and the foreign ministers.

Murville, as Baraduc had done, suggested that President Kennedy should be asked to conduct an investigation of CIA's possible involvement.

"What do you want us to investigate?" Salinger asked.

Murville mentioned that CIA had been sticking its nose into internal affairs all over the world.

"That may be true," Salinger replied. "but CIA does not operate in a vacuum. It's responsible to the President. It doesn't operate without any direction from the top."

The next day Murville appeared before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Chamber of Deputies to testify that there was no evidence of the CIA's complicity.

Obviously, however, CIA made whatever contacts it could in the controversy raging over de Gaulle's Algerian policies. CIA is always bound to acquire as much intelligence as it can about dissenting groups all over the world, whether they be in friendly countries or not.

CIA WAS AWARE of the violent dissatisfaction of the rebel Houas generals with the de Gaulle



MR. de MURVILLE
Foreign Minister Backs Down

indictment that America's super-secret intelligence organization was overly eager to get mixed up in policy-making operations.

THE INDICTMENT, perhaps, should be drawn up only against those operatives, naive and politically ignorant, who could not resist taking a detour from pure intelligence to dabble in policy-making. But, the responsibility for keeping such people in hand rests at the top.

CIA has a noble end in view—the defeat of the international Communist conspiracy. But with such a goal, the nagging question has always been whether CIA could keep its intelligence impartial, that is, whether it could restrain itself from reporting dangerous conclusions merely because those conclusions coincided with the urgent necessity of battling

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